

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 6-8, 10-12, 15-16, and 18-19, and ADD new claims 20-24 in accordance with the following:

1. (Original) Apparatus for loading a substrate onto a processing surface in a thin-film processing chamber, the apparatus comprising a support which cooperates with one or more corresponding apertures in the processing surface so as to be movable between an extended position in which the support can support a substrate above the processing surface, and a retracted position in which the support is flush with or located below the processing surface, wherein the support comprises a number of limbs extending radially outwardly from a central hub, at an angle relative to the processing surface, the limbs being configured to contact the edges of different sized substrates in use so as to support the substrate in a support plane substantially parallel to the processing surface, the support plane being provided above the central hub.

2. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each limb defines a continuous support surface extending at an angle relative to the processing surface, each support surface contacting the edges of different sized substrates in use.

3. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, the apparatus further comprising a loading arm having a mounting which receives a substrate in use, the loading arm being movable between a retracted position and an extended position in which the mounting and the support cooperate such that, in use, motion of the support to the extended position causes the substrate to be supported by the support, thereby removing the substrate from the mounting.

4. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the mounting is located outside the chamber when the loading arm is in the retracted position.

5. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the mounting comprises a number of mounting elements extending radially outwardly from a central portion, each mounting element defining a number of mounting surfaces, and each mounting surface being associated with a respective mounting plane.

6. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 3, the apparatus further comprising a drive ~~means for~~unit controllably moving the loading arm between the extended and retracted positions.

7. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, the apparatus further comprising an actuator ~~for~~ controllably moving the support between the extended and retracted positions.

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8. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, the apparatus further comprising a clamp movable between an open position and a clamping position ~~for clamping to~~clamp the substrate to the processing surface.

9. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the clamp comprises an annular clamping element extending radially inwardly from an outer clamping ring, the clamping ring being positioned radially outwardly from the processing surface.

10. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 9, the apparatus further comprising a clamp actuator ~~for moving to move~~to move the clamp between the open and clamping positions, the clamping ring being removably mounted to the clamp actuator.

11. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 4, the apparatus further comprising a controller ~~for~~ controllably moving the support and the loading arm between their respective retracted and extended positions.

12. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a loading assembly having a mounting which receives a substrate in use, the loading assembly being movable between a retracted position in which the mounting is outside the processing

system-chamber and an extended position in which the mounting is inside the processing system-chamber, and wherein the mounting comprises a number of mounting elements extending substantially radially outwardly from a central position, each mounting element defining a number of mounting surfaces, and each mounting surface being associated with a respective mounting plane, and wherein the mounting and the support cooperate such that, in use, with the loading assembly in the extended position, motion of the support to the extended position causes the substrate to be supported by the support, thereby removing the substrate from the mounting.

13. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 12, wherein each mounting plane is adapted to be used when loading a respective size of substrate.

B1 14. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 12, wherein each mounting plane is adapted to be used when loading a respective size of substrate, and wherein the mounting is adapted such that in use a substrate positioned on the mounting in the respective mounting plane will be located substantially over the centre of the processing surface when the loading assembly is in the extended position.

15. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the apparatus further ~~comprising~~ comprises a drive means ~~for unit~~ controllably moving the loading arm assembly between the extended and retracted positions.

16. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus according to claim 12,~~ An apparatus for loading a substrate onto a processing surface in a thin-film processing chamber, the apparatus comprising:

a support which cooperates with one or more corresponding apertures in the processing surface so as to be movable between an extended position in which the support can support a substrate above the processing surface, and a retracted position in which the support is flush with or located below the processing surface, wherein the support comprises a number of limbs extending radially outwardly from a central hub, at an angle relative to the processing surface, the limbs being configured to contact the edges of different sized substrates in use so as to support the substrate in a support plane substantially parallel to the processing surface, the support plane being provided above the central hub; and

a loading assembly having a mounting which receives a substrate in use, the loading assembly being movable between a retracted position in which the mounting is outside the processing chamber and an extended position in which the mounting is inside the processing chamber, and wherein the mounting comprises a number of mounting elements extending substantially radially outwardly from a central position, each mounting element defining a number of mounting surfaces, and each mounting surface being associated with a respective mounting plane, and wherein the mounting and the support cooperate such that, in use, with the loading assembly in the extended position, motion of the support to the extended position causes the substrate to be supported by the support, thereby removing the substrate from the mounting,

wherein the loading assembly comprises a carriage; ~~a first drive means for unit driving the carriage with respect to a base; and a second drive means which unit that moves with the carriage and cooperates with the base, whereby the relative movement between the carriage and the base causes the second drive means-unit to drive the mounting with respect to the carriage.~~

17. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the carriage is slidably mounted to the base and the mounting is slidably mounted to the carriage.

18. (Currently Amended) A thin film processing system comprising one or more processing chambers in which substrates are processed, and the apparatus according to claim 1 for loading to load the substrates.

19 (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The system according to claim 18, wherein the system is a plasma processing system for treatment of semiconductor wafers.

20. (New) Apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a conduit supplying cooling gas to enhance heat transfer between the processing surface and a substrate placed, in use, on the processing surface.

21. (New) Apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the conduit surrounds the central hub of the support.

22. (New) Apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the conduit communicates with the said one or more apertures.

b1 23. (New) Apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the limbs of the support are a close fit in the respective ones of the said apertures.

24. (New) Apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the processing surface defines a number of inlet holes whose openings face a substrate placed, in use, on the processing surface, the inlet holes communicating with the conduit.
